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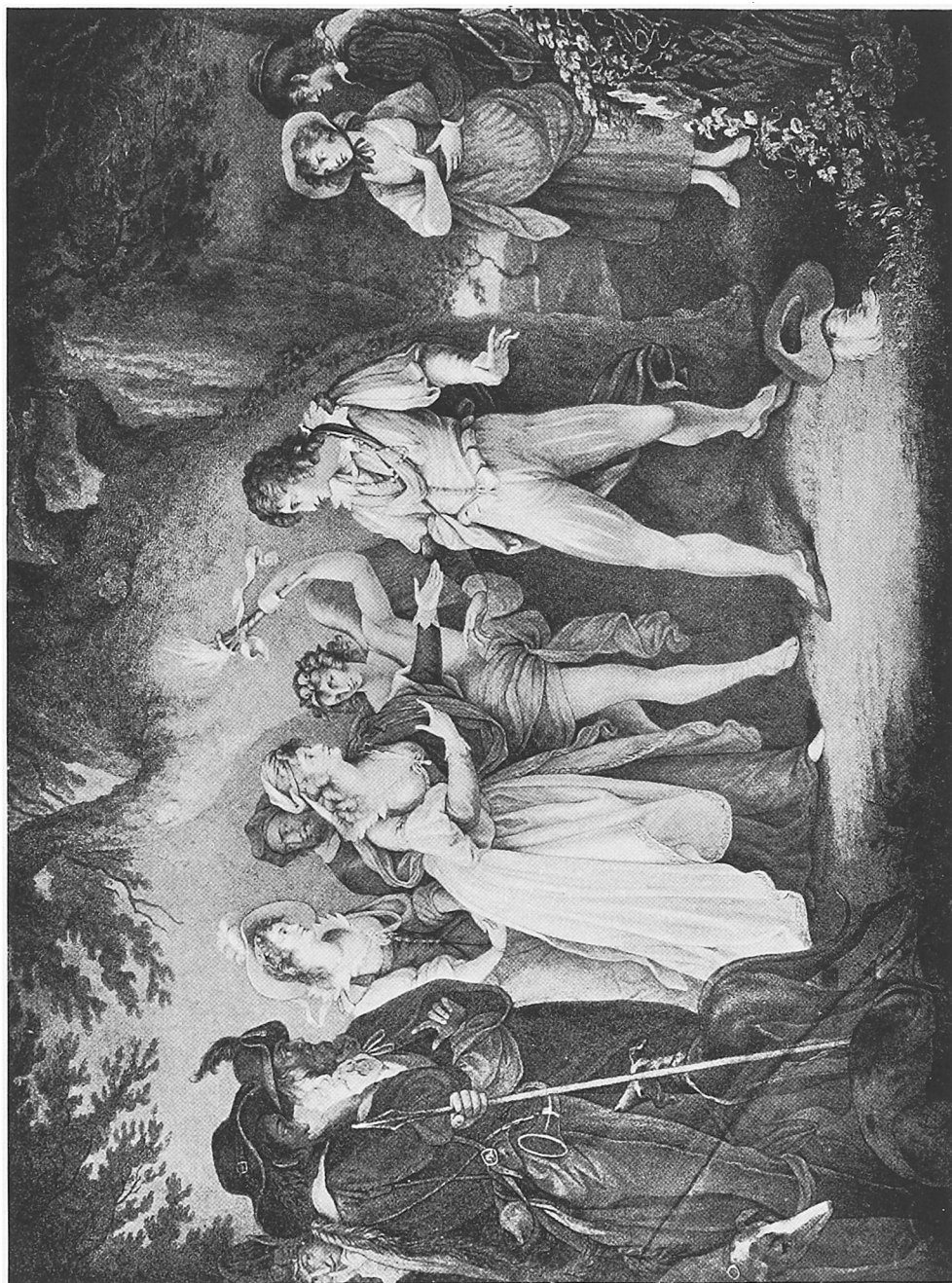
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As You Like It. Act V., Scene IV.  
From the Boydell Prints.

## ROSALIND IN THE WOODS OF ARDEN

WHEN I first saw Orlando, his circumstances outwardly were worse than my own; so desperate, in fact, that, in order to court fortune, he had challenged Duke Frederick's wrestler, Charles, who was so strong and skillful that he had thrown all who had come to meet him. As for myself, though Duke Frederick was my uncle, he had usurped the rights of my father, the lawful Duke, and had banished him. I, too, would have been an exile had not my cousin Celia, with whom I had grown up in loving companionship, protested to her father that, if I was sent away, she would contrive to follow me. Because of my cousin and the fear that I might be a burden to my father, who, with a few faithful followers, had sought refuge in the forest of Arden, I remained at my uncle's court. There I was tolerated, but not welcome, for was I not a constant reminder to Duke Frederick of the wrong he had done my father, his own brother?

It may have been through thinking of my own uncertain fortunes that I was led to sympathize with Orlando, whom I did not know even by name, when he stepped forth to wrestle with Charles. In spite of his poor attire, his mien and bearing bespoke gentle birth. Like myself, he appeared to have suffered reverses. Though his figure was well-knit and alert, he seemed no match for the brutish Charles; and as the wrestler had maimed some of those

whom he had thrown. I could not refrain from pleading with the newcomer to give up the match. This he declined to do, but added in so courteous and winning a manner, "Let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial," that I could not help exclaiming, "Would that what little strength I have could be added to yours!"

Yet the outcome showed that my solicitude was unnecessary. For although this handsome youth seemed a poor match for Charles, yet he was so supple, so keen in following up every advantage and, withal, so strong, when it came to putting his strength to the test, that finally getting a firm hold on Charles, he lifted him off his feet and threw him so heavily to the ground that he lay there speechless.

"What is your name, young man?" asked Duke Frederick, when the shout that greeted the newcomer's victory, had subsided and Charles had been borne away.

"Orlando, my liege, the youngest son of Sir Roland de Bois."

Then I knew why my sympathies had gone out to him. For Sir Roland had been one of my father's staunchest friends and, had he lived, would have gone with him into exile. But Orlando's reply changed whatever favor Duke Frederick had intended showing him into the opposite, and, rising abruptly, he departed with his courtiers, leaving him standing with Celia and myself. Drawn to Orlando both because he

was the son of my father's friend and—shall I confess it so soon?—for himself alone, I took a chain from my neck and handed it to him, saying, "Wear this for me. If I could, I would give more, but, like yourself, I too am out with fortune."

At this he was so confused that he could not even stammer his thanks, as if he had received so few favors that mine had come upon him too suddenly, but later we heard him calling after us—which I would have made an excuse for returning to him had not Celia drawn me away.

"Is it possible," she asked, "that you should so soon conceive so strong a liking for old Sir Roland's son?"

"My father loved his father dearly," I argued.

"Does it follow that you should love his son dearly at first sight?" she asked, looking up at me with a sly little smile, so that I knew she understood why it was that Orlando, young and handsome, out with fortune, yet most chivalrous in bearing, and with the memory of his father's loyalty to mine, should have made so swift an appeal to my heart. But Celia and I had no further immediate opportunity to dwell on this. For we saw Duke Frederick approaching, his whole manner denoting anger. It seems that the victory scored over his favorite wrestler by the son of my father's staunchest friend had roused his slumbering ire against me.

"Begone from our court!" he cried, addressing me. "If after ten days you are found within twenty miles of here, you shall be put to death. . . . You are your father's daughter, that's enough!" And such was the only reason he would vouchsafe. Then Celia interceded for

me, but without avail. "She reminds the people of the duke whom I have banished," he said; "and you will seem brighter and prettier to them when she is out of the way." Then he stalked off and left us to ourselves.

So great was Celia's love for me that the first words she spoke after her father was out of hearing were these: "In banishing you the Duke has banished me, his daughter."

"Alas, where shall we go?" was all I could say, though I was deeply moved by her devotion.

But while I was oppressed with doubts, Celia, being otherwise care-free, was moved by the spirit of adventure. "Where shall we go!" she exclaimed. "Why, to seek my uncle, your father, in the woods of Arden. As for danger—we will don mean attire, smirch our faces with umber, and, like any two lowly maids, make our way unmolested."

At this my spirits rose and, if possible, even more adventurous than she, I conceived a daring notion, which was nothing less than to act as Celia's protector. "How would it be," I exclaimed, "if, being more than common tall, I should dress myself man-fashion, assume a swashing and martial outside, and let whatever I have of woman's fear lie hidden in my heart?"

So nimble was Celia's wit that, without stopping to argue the matter, she simply asked, "And what shall I call you, Cousin, when you are a man?" Then we burst out laughing and dashed off to prepare for what now seemed to us a merry escapade, although I could not help being saddened at thought of what would become of Orlando. For I knew that a son of Sir Roland would not be tolerated—any more than my-

self—near Duke Frederick's court. I should have liked to send him a hint to seek his fortune—and me—in the woods of Arden. But although I was to wear a gallant curtal-ax at my side, carry a boar-spear in my hand—and be a man—I was still a woman.

Finding the forest broad and dense, not knowing in what part of it my father held his sylvan court, and being weary to the point of collapse from unaccustomed travel when we reached the outskirts of the woods, I bought a sheep-cote that chanced to be for sale. There I planned that we would rest, and then from there as a rendezvous make search for my father. To this I would add that, no one having penetrated my disguise, there began to be in it, as well as in the adventure, a certain zest from which I was loath to part. Indeed so bold was I become that a few days later, when I was following a trail through the forest and heard a man somewhere ahead of me singing,

Under the greenwood tree  
Who loves to lie with me,  
And turn his merry note  
Unto the sweet bird's throat,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither:  
Here shall he see  
No enemy  
But winter and rough weather,

I made my way straight to the spot from where the voice came. There I found Amiens and Jaques and others of the lords who had followed my father into exile. They were camped under a spreading oak, and it was Amiens who was singing. Meet that he should be, for he was a cheerful soul, while Jaques, who sat with a thoughtful countenance, was of so contemplative a nature that at my father's court we had called him "the melan-

choly Jaques." And that a roof of leaves and sky had not changed his disposition, but rather confirmed it, appeared presently, when one of the group likened the change in their fortunes to a change of scene in a play, and wondered when it would shift again. For straightway Jaques began in measured tones, like one engaged in a discourse on philosophy, to argue that the whole world is a stage and men and women merely players, making their exits and their entrances, and one man, in his time, playing many parts, his acts being seven ages—"at first," so Jaques argued, "the infant squirming in his nurse's arms; then the schoolboy creeping like a snail unwillingly to school; then the lover sighing like a furnace and penning verses to his lady's eyebrow; then the soldier, bearded, quick in quarrel and courting fame even in the cannon's mouth; then the justice, plump and round from good living, quoting wise maxims and ancient precedent; sixth age, the lean and slippered old man, his voice turning toward childish treble; till, last scene of all, ending a strange, eventful history, is second childishness and mere oblivion."

Whether some divined a kind of sad truth in this discourse or it was the grave manner of the man who had made it that stopped all quip and jest, a silence followed; and I, fearing that if I were observed by so wise a man he would know me, quietly left the group and retraced my way, assured that all was well with my father, for otherwise Amiens would not have sung so cheerily. I planned to seek my father the next day, but presently there happened something that changed my

purpose. For, as I made my way back toward the sheepcote, I saw fluttering from a tree a sheet of paper, and on the paper some writing, and, looking more closely, in the writing my own name. Amazed that a forest tree should bear such strange fruit, I plucked the paper from the bough. There were verses and, more strange yet, every other verse ended with my name, in this fashion:

From the east to western Ind,  
No jewel is like Rosalind.  
Her worth, being mounted on the wind,  
Through all the world bears Rosalind.  
All the pictures fairest lin'd  
Are but black to Rosalind.  
Let no face be kept in mind  
But the fair of Rosalind.

Scarcely had I taken in the meaning of the verses—that they were in praise of someone of my own name—when I saw “Rosalind” carved in large letters on the trunk of another tree; and, almost immediately after, espied Celia coming toward me holding in her hand another paper, from which she was reading. While I was wondering if she, too, had found verses in praise of herself growing on trees, she began to repeat aloud what was written on the paper. It was more verses in praise of Rosalind—comparing her cheek to Helen’s, her majesty to Cleopatra’s, her beauty to Atalanta’s and her modesty to Lucretia’s, and concluding:

Heaven would that she these gifts should have,  
And I to live and die her slave.

“Can you hear how your name is hung and carved on these trees without being moved to wonder by it?” asked Celia.

“Of a nine days’ wonder I have already had seven,” I said. “For look here what I myself have found!” And

I handed her the verses that I had plucked from the tree.

“And do you know who has done this?” she asked.

Now although between wonder I also had begun to hope, I wished to seem indifferent, so all I said was, “Is it a man?”

“Yes,” she replied. “And a chain that once you wore yourself is about his neck.”

At this I blurted out his name—“Orlando!” and Celia cried out merrily, “Yes, the same Orlando, who tripped up the wrestler’s heels and your heart both on the instant!”

“What was he doing when you saw him? Why is he here? Is he well, and as strong and handsome as on the day he threw the wrestler? Did he ask for me? Where is he?”

All these questions I put to Celia so rapidly that when I finished I was quite out of breath; and she was laughing at my excitement.

“You know I am a woman,” I said by way of explaining my haste, “and when I think, I have to speak.”

“A woman!” she exclaimed, and laughed again. “I thought you were a man. What think you of a ‘swashing and martial outside’ now?”

“Alas,” I cried, “the day that I donned doublet and hose! For now that I most would be a woman I still must feign to be a man.”

“And never more than at this moment,” said Celia. “For Orlando is coming this way.” And so he was, conversing with Jaques. “Rosalind is your love’s name?” I heard Jaques ask and saw Orlando incline his head in the affirmative. “And what is her stature?” asked Jaques. “Just as high as

my heart," answered Orlando. I thought this a most charming and poetical answer, and was so touched by it that, but for my mannish garb, I would have called out to him that his Rosalind was in plain view. As it was, however, I waited until Jaques had gone his way, then accosted Orlando, testing—I know not why, save in a spirit of bravado—the heart I knew already mine.

"There is," I said, "a man who haunts this forest and abuses the trees by carving 'Rosalind' in the bark, and who hangs odes on hawthorns and elegies on brambles, all, forsooth, hymning the praise of Rosalind. Could I meet him, I would give him good counsel, for he seems to have the very fever of love upon him."

"I am he who is so shaken by love that you might call it a fever," he answered.

"Are you as much in love as your rhymes imply?"

"I swear by the white hand of Rosalind that neither rhyme nor reason can express how much I am in love with her."

"Love is merely a madness," I urged, "and lovers should be locked up like any other lunatics. Yet I can cure you. Imagine that I am Rosalind, and call me by that name and woo me as if I were she. Then I shall be changeable and inconstant, now smiles, now tears; now likable, now proud; now weeping for you, now out upon you—and altogether so fantastical that you will soon tire of me, and so be cured of your love for 'Rosalind,' since you are to imagine that I am she."

"I do not wish to be cured," he said, "yet I will undertake what you advise, for the pleasure of calling you Rosa-

lind; for, although you are a youth, you are fair, and there is about you enough of Rosalind for you to be her brother."

"But if I really were Rosalind, what would you say to me?" for I longed to hear how he would woo me. The answer was more than I had expected. "I would kiss you before I spoke." Then, hoping he might do so, for I forgot my man's attire and that men do not kiss, I said, "then do it." "What would the real Rosalind do were I to?" he asked. "By my life," I exclaimed, "she would do as I would! Whatever I say, whatever I do, the same would Rosalind."

"Then love me, Rosalind."

"And so I will—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, the rest of the week and Sunday."

"And will Rosalind love me when I am away from her?" he asked. "For now I must be gone for two hours to dine with the Duke. But by two o'clock I will be with you again."

"By my troth and in good earnest, and by all pretty oaths that are not dangerous," I cried out, so loath was I to lose him even if only for two hours, "if you break one jot of your promise or come one minute behind the time, I will hold that you have broken faith and are a most hollow lover! Therefore beware my censure and keep your promise!"

"With the same faith as I would were you indeed my Rosalind!"

Again I was almost on the point of letting him know who I was, but had I determined to get him and my father's consent at the same time; and his going to attend my father, from which I knew that he had joined him in the forest after

having been driven from Frederick's court, gave me the sudden means of putting my plan into effect.

"If you really love Rosalind as much as you protest you do," I said to Orlando, "and will conduct me to her father, so that I may pledge his consent to your union, it is not impossible that she may appear before your eyes today."

"But how do I know that she will consent?" he asked. "We have met only once—which was enough for me to fall in love with her. But why, save for a miracle, should she be in love with me?"

"Because," I replied, "I have told you that Rosalind would do the same as I. And, were I Rosalind, the miracle would have happened."

This seemed to satisfy him in a fashion, and he led Celia and myself along the path to the camp under the tree, where I found my father and his attendants in some excitement. It seems that the usurping duke, Celia's father, had, after his daughter's flight with me, seriously considered upon his course and repented the wrong he had done my father, and had just sent a messenger to recall him from banishment and to announce the restoration of his dukedom and title. Some might have doubted whether my father would now bestow me upon Orlando, but I knew his noble mind, and that he measured men not by what they had, but by what they were.

"And you believe, Orlando, that this youth can do all that he has promised?" asked my father, after Orlando had explained my presence.

"A little patience," I said, addressing my father. "In spite of your high estate, will you, if I bring Rosalind, bestow her on Orlando?"

"That I would, even if I had a kingdom to give her."

"And you, Orlando, will you have her if I bring her?"

"That I would, and were I the king of all kingdoms."

Then Celia and I retired to a shelter, whither we had bid a shepherd in our employ bear my feminine attire and Celia's court gown; and when we had donned this, we stepped out again before the company.

"To you I give myself, for I am yours," I said to my father; "and to you I give myself, for I am yours, too," I repeated to Orlando. Then, to my father, "I'll have no father if you are not he;" and then to Orlando, "I'll have no husband if you are not he!" But even before I had finished the last, my father had placed my hand in my lover's and had turned to greet Celia, the while two young pages cheerily sang,

It was a lover and his lass,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
That o'er the green corn-field did pass,  
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;  
Sweet lovers love the spring.